

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00957 080125Z

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 SAM-01 OMB-01 L-03 SCA-01

DRC-01 /056 W

----- 097525

R 070839Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2409

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 957

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY COURT-MARTIAL CASES: CHRISTIANS ON
TRIAL

1. EMERGENCY COURT-MARTIAL SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED THAT
PROSECUTOR HAS DEMANDED 15 YEARS AT HARD LABOR FOR
FOUR DEFENDANTS AND TEN YEARS FOR TWO DEFENDANTS AT
FEB 6 TRIAL SESSION OF SIX CHRISTIAN ACTIVISTS
CHARGED WITH VIOLATING EMERGENCY MEASURE NO. 1.
PROSECUTOR ALSO DEMANDED SUSPENSION OF CIVIL RIGHTS
FOR SAME DURATION AS SENTENCES. SPOKESMAN SAID
COURT FINISHED HEARING TESTIMONY AT THIS SESSION,
I.E., TRIAL CONCLUDED EXCEPT FOR SENTENCING.

2. FIRST TRIAL SESSION WAS HELD FEB 4 AT MINISTRY OF
DEFENSE (MINDEF) WITH NO PUBLICITY. LIMITED NUMBER OF
REPORTERS AND FAMILY OF ACCUSED WERE PRESENT. PRESS SOURCE SAID
PRIVATELY THAT DEFENDANTS DENIED NOTHING AND
FORTHRIGHTLY ASSERTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THEIR
ACTS. ALSO SAID PRESIDING GENERAL PAK HI-DONG
SHOWED UNUSUALLY RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE TOWARDS
THE ACCUSED.

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3. G-2 HAS A REPORT FROM A ROK INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

SOURCE THAT TWO AMERICAN PRIESTS AND SEVEN OR EIGHT KOREAN CHRISTIANS STOOD OUTSIDE MINDEF COMPOUND IN SILENT PROTEST DURING FEB 6 SESSION. REPORT GAVE NO INDICATION WHETHER ANY ACTION BEING TAKEN AGAINST THEM. ONE OF THE AMERICANS, IDENTIFIED ONLY AS A JESUIT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT SOGANG UNIVERSITY, WAS ALSO PRESENT TOGETHER WITH GROUP OF 47 KOREAN CHRISTIANS ON PREVIOUS DAY WHEN SECOND SESSION ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED. GROUP DISPERSED WHEN TOLD THAT TRIAL HAD BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL AFTERNOON OF FEB 6. COURT-MARTIAL THEN CONVENED FEB 6 IN THE MORNING IN PARTLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO ELUDE DEMONSTRATORS.

4. COMMENT: UNCOMPROMISING ATTITUDE OF DEFENDANTS IS WIDELY KNOWN AMONG CHRISTIANS AND REPORTERS. NO OTHER SOURCE HAS YET MENTIONED INVOLVEMENT OF AMERICAN PRIESTS IN ATTEMPTED PROTEST.
HABIB

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL REPRESSION, CHRISTIANS, POLITICAL TRIALS, POLITICAL PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SEOUL00957
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740248/aaaabtjl.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JUL 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <31 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EMERGENCY COURT-MARTIAL CASES: CHRISTIANS ON TRIAL
TAGS: PINT, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005